

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-02 H-02

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 602

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EAIR, WB, US, UK, FR, UR

SUBJECT: BERLIN AVIATION: POTENTIAL POLITICAL
PROBLEMS OF ROUTE DIVISION

REF: STATE 65474

1. SUMMARY: WE ARE NOT OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT PROBLEMS
BRITISH HAVE FLAGGED ON POTENTIAL NON-USE OF CORRIDORS
BY PAN AM OR BA, BUT AGREE CONTINGENCY DISCUSSIONS WITH
PAN AM AND BA ON THEIR ABILITY TO COVER FOR EACH OTHER
COULD BE USEFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. WE SHARE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW THAT ABSENCE OF REGULARLY
SCHEDULED PAN AM FLIGHTS IN CENTRAL CORRIDOR WOULD BE
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UNLIKELY TO TEMPT SOVIETS INTO TRYING SALAMI TACTICS

ON CORRIDORS REGIME. BASIC SAFEGUARD REMAINS SOVIET AWARENESS THAT WE WOULD TREAT SUCH ATTEMPTS AS SERIOUS MATTER AFFECTING BASIC USG INTERESTS IN BERLIN.

3. ADDITIONALLY, PAN AM AND US FLAG CARRIER PRESENCE WILL BE MAINTAINED AT FAIRLY STEADY, THOUGH REDUCED, LEVEL IF PROPOSED ROUTE-SHARING SCHEME IS IMPLEMENTED. PAN AM'S SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO AND FROM MUNICH, FRANKFURT, NUERNBERG, AND STUTTGART WOULD NORMALLY BE CARRIED OUT VIA SOUTH CORRIDOR, BUT IT IS FAIRLY STANDARD PRACTICE FOR PILOTS TO REQUEST AND ROUTINELY OBTAIN CLEARANCE TO DIVERT TO CENTRAL CORRIDOR FOR VARIOUS REASONS, INCLUDING WEATHER AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION. IN FIRST 23 DAYS OF MARCH, FOR EXAMPLE, 18 REGULARLY SCHEDULED PAN AM FLIGHTS WERE DIVERTED FROM SOUTH TO CENTRAL CORRIDOR. FURTHERMORE, US FLAG CORRIDORS SINCE THEIR DESTINATIONS ARE USUALLY WELL OUTSIDE FRG, AND TRAVEL VIA CENTRAL CORRIDOR REDUCES FLYING TIME AT UNECONOMICAL 10,000 FOOT LEVEL. IN DECEMBER 1974, FOR EXAMPLE, US CIVILIAN CHARTERS FLEW 48 FLIGHTS IN CENTRAL CORRIDOR AS OPPOSED TO 14 IN SOUTH CORRIDOR. WE BELIEVE PAN AM WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY WITH INFORMALLY ESTABLISHING POLICY OF DIVERTING AT LEAST ONE SCHEDULED FLIGHT IN SOUTH CORRIDOR TO CENTRAL CORRIDOR EACH DAY, BUT THIS SEEMS HARDLY NECESSARY.

4. RE SECOND BRITISH CONCERN, WE DOUBT THAT ROUTE-DIVISION PLAN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES IGS VULNERABILITY TO SUBSTANTIAL DISRUPTION THROUGH STRIKE OR OTHER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. (IN FACT, THERE HAS BEEN NO REALLY CRIPPLING STRIKE IN HISTORY OF IGS, AND AIRLINES AND THEIR PERSONNEL REMAIN AWARE OF NEED, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, TO EXEMPT IGS FROM STRIKE ACTIONS AND HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO PAST APPEALS FROM GOVERNMENTS.) WERE ONE AIRLINE TO BE STRUCK OR OTHERWISE DISABLED, HOWEVER, ROUTE DIVISION COULD RESULT IN SITUATION WHERE SEVERAL LARGE CITIES WERE DEPRIVED OF SCHEDULE AIR SERVICE. SO LONG AS PAN AM AND BA MAINTAIN THEIR PLANS TO AVOID CUTTING BACK ON NUMBER OF PLANES AND FLIGHT CREWS DEDICATED TO IGS AND EFFECT THEIR SAVINGS ESSENTIALLY FROM REDUCTION IN GROUP SUPPORT FACILITIES, TICKET COUNTERS, ETC. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE

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FOR EITHER AIRLINE TO SHIFT SCHEDULES ON EMERGENCY BASIS TO PROVIDE SOME DEGREE OF COVERAGE TO AFFECTED ROUTES. WE WOULD AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO DISCUSS THIS CONTINGENCY REQUIREMENT WITH BOTH PAN AM AND BA. IF DEPARTMENT AGREES, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SOUND OUT PAN AM LOCALLY ON FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING SUCH CONTINGENCY PLANS, BUT MAJOR DISCUSSION WOULD PROBABLY BEST BE CARRIED OUT BY CAA'S. OUR UNDERSTANDING HERE IS THAT PAN AM WOULD

BE MORE THAN WILLING TO FILL IN FOR BA, AND THAT BA, WHILE
POSSESSING LESSER RESOURCES, WOULD ALSO MAKE GOOD EFFORT
AT COVERING FOR PAN AM.SELIGMANN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AVIATION AGREEMENTS, AIR ROUTES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975USBERL00602
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750106-0278
From: USBERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750312/aaaaakih.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 65474
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <27 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BERLIN AVIATION: POTENTIAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF ROUTE DIVISION
TAGS: PGOV, EAIR, WB, US, UK, FR, UR, PANAM
To: STATE BONN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006